Pictorialism, Photography and Colonial Culture, 1880–1940

On September 1, 1930, a one-man show of more than 300 photographs, 'the like of which', it was claimed, had 'not previously been exhibited in New Zealand', opened at the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts gallery, in Wellington's Whitmore Street.[1] The pictures were taken by Harry Moult, a Wanganui-raised, Wellington-based electrical engineer and amateur photographer. Already having caused 'almost a furore' when they were exhibited overseas, these photographs created some excitement in Wellington too.[2] The show was opened by the Governor-General, Lord Bledisloe, a camera enthusiast himself: in his opening speech, he noted that he usually spent the first day of September shooting partridges, but this year had resolved to swap his shotgun for a camera, to bag 'some of your scenic spots' instead.[3] Dismal weather dashed his plans, but there were plenty of examples of New Zealand's scenery displayed on the gallery walls around him. Among Moult's photographs were spectacular images of New Zealand: snow-covered mountains, wreathed with clouds and reflected in looking-glass lakes, local farms rendered as rural pastorale, and geysers caught billowing white plumes of steam.

Lakes, mountains and thermal wonders were part of a well-rehearsed repertoire of New Zealand's scenic attractions, their natural beauty enhanced by the visual style of the photographs. They were accomplished examples of pictorialism, an artistic style that became popular internationally from the end of the nineteenth century. Reacting against the idea of photography as simply a mechanical means of recording reality, pictorialists championed photography as an art form, like painting or poetry. As with these other forms of art, pictorialism was governed by its own set of aesthetic and technical conventions. Clouds, mist and picturesque landscapes were part of its visual stock-in-trade, and pictorialists took great care to augment the romantic qualities of these subjects through the printing process, manipulating the tones, shades, and sometimes even content, of their pictures. An unsightly telegraphic post could be erased, while a few clouds might be added to lend extra atmosphere.[4] Moult enhanced the appeal of his images by printing them using the consummately artistic, expensive and technically demanding carbon process, which allowed great subtlety of tone and brought heightened realism to the finished image. New Zealand's scenic spots became even more so when viewed through his pictorialist lens.

Pictorialism's New Zealand: Harry Moult, Mountain mists, Lake Ada, Milford Sound, O.031860, MNZ.

However, Moult's pictorialist vision was not limited to local mountains and lakes. Instead, it extended beyond New Zealand's usual geographical boundaries to incorporate another set of familiar scenes. Exhibition-goers could see Trafalgar Square mantled in snow along with Mt Cook, and the Houses of Parliament as well as the Rotorua Bathhouse, for alongside Moult's local landscapes were more than a hundred photographs of England and London.[5] His work made 'living pictures' out of 'England's old thatched cottages' and 'ancient cathedrals, ruined or otherwise'.[6] The 'most striking' were images from London streets: a London Bobby, a London postbox, even penguins at the London zoo.[7] As the *Evening Post*'s reporter noted, these had a special resonance for exhibition-goers: 'Most people are familiar with pictures of London, and to those especially who have visited the Homeland, the various typical scenes are a source of keen delight.'[8] Strolling around the gallery, New Zealanders could reacquaint themselves with those familiar sights, the 'beautiful, artistic effects' of his photographs reinforcing already well-embedded imagery of London's iconic buildings, famous thoroughfares, and archetypal inhabitants.

Moult's pictures drew crowds because they were outstanding examples of pictorialism. However, they are also outstanding examples of a particular, and overlooked, form of colonialism. From the late nineteenth century, New Zealand began to move away from its old identity as a colony of empire, and towards a new relationship with Britain as a colony of the metropolis.[9] The driving force behind this shift, which James Belich has termed recolonization, was New Zealand's new economic role as pastoral exporter to Britain.[10] But this force was enabled and extended by a suite of new technologies developed in the late nineteenth century that were capable of transforming perceptions of time and space. Contemporaries claimed that steamships, telegraph, film,

sound recording, and later, radio, could 'annihilate distance'. Photography would have the same effect: early exponent William Lake Price claimed it made the world 'familiar' and brought it 'in intense reality to our very hearths'.[11] Subsequently, historians have regularly noted the power of these new technologies to knit together a nation. But the same forces also drew New Zealand closer to its metropolis, and this had a critical yet unacknowledged cultural impact. They enabled a new 'New Zealand' to be imagined: the once far-flung colony could be remade as a neighbouring British hinterland. The new relationship of colony and metropolis – close and complementary, not distant and different – is both captured in and constructed by Moult's photographs.[12] On the gallery walls, 'typical' scenes of metropolitan culture blended with equally predictable scenes of 'natural' New Zealand. Moult's street scenes were set in London streets, and his crowds were London crowds. His New Zealand, in return, echoed with a sublime emptiness that was tempered only occasionally by a picturesque subject. Culturally as much as economically, older forms of colonial 'progress' gave way to a new colonial pastoral. The photographs on the wall of the Whitmore Street art gallery make the form of this transition clear. But the current shape of our historiography has tended to obscure this shift. In the context of nationalist historical narratives, particularly those interested in linking high cultural production and national identities, photographs of landscapes in an English pictorialist style are considered outdated and derivative, lingering legacies of a colonial past out of place in the story of an evolving 'authentic' New Zealand high culture in the interwar period. The popular *New Zealand's Heritage* magazine, which portioned out New Zealand's transformation from colony to nation in monthly illustrated instalments through the early 1970s, and was perhaps the most widely read of our nationalist histories, described imported English pictorialism as one of the 'frustrating limitations' in the development of local photography.[13] In his recent survey of New Zealand photography, David Eggleton continues to link pictorialism with just this kind of past: 'Much of the Pictorialist imagery of the mid twentieth century is easy on the eye, decorative and picturesque to a fault. The nineteenth-century conventions, adopted from art and intended to idealize subjects, now served to render these subjects hidebound by formula.'[14] Like *Kowhai Gold* verse with its tuis and treacle, nationalist histories cast pictorialism as a ghost of colonialism past, and its practitioners as cultural Rip van Winkles suffering from a severe case of 'cosy national narcolepsy'.[15]

Colonialism 'out of place' – or more exactly, out of time – troubles nationalist narratives by challenging the supposed epistemic break between nineteenth-century colonial deference and twentieth-century national

assertiveness. However, though decentring the nation has been a key concern of recent historiography, there is surprisingly little work that pursues the processes and practices of colonial culture into the twentieth century.[16] Though Peter Gibbon's influential cultural colonization thesis explicitly drew attention to colonization as an ongoing process that continued into the twentieth century, in New Zealand historiography, being colonial remains, with some exceptions, a distinctly Victorian activity.[17] There are two key reasons for this. First, the project of unsettling the nation so far has largely been conceived in terms of space, rather than time. Historians have been encouraged to think above, under, and through the construct of the 'nation', the scale of their vision oscillating from a tight focus on local specificities of a town like Gore through to the wider world of transnational histories and back again.[18] Time's totalizing frameworks have been subject to less scrutiny. Just as the 'nation' can act as a misleading shorthand, so too can terms like 'colonial', which is used to effortlessly span the 60 or so years from 1840 to the end of the nineteenth century, cloaking a myriad of cultural changes in just the same way that the nation smoothes over local difference or transnational influence. Caroline Daley's suggestion that New Zealand was instead 'born modern' is one response to the monolithic colonial past, although modernity remains an equally commodious yet inexact term.[19] James Belich's colonial trio, incremental and explosive colonization along with recolonization, recognizes significant shifts in the nature of colonization over time – 'colonial' means something quite different in 1840 and in 1890 – but there has been relatively little historiographical engagement with this reworking. Perhaps signalling the primacy of the spatial in current thought, critiques of this thesis have largely focused on recolonization's assertion of renewed British links, rather than the much more widely applicable idea that colonization has changing modes.[20]

Indeed, these critiques suggest that despite an increased emphasis on circulation, current conceptions of what constitutes 'colonial space' remain almost as tightly bounded as time. Most attention has been on what might be considered New Zealand's internal colonial mechanism, the relationships between settler and indigenous culture.[21] However, as Tony Ballantyne has recently re-emphasized, 'being colonial was defined by both a set of relationships between the colonists and the indigenous people they dispossessed *and* a set of relationships that connected those colonists to the United Kingdom, Ireland and component parts of the empire'.[22] One set of relationships helped sustain the other; it follows that to fully understand the settler colonial dynamic we also need to pay attention to those external ties, how they were formed and how they functioned. As yet, though, there is little

work on this other relationship. Newer cultural histories have tended to engage with transnationalism as an antidote to the old narrative of national identity, emphasizing New Zealand's connectedness over its isolation and drawing it more tightly into histories of globalization and modernity. However, few are specifically interested in the ways those transnational links sustained and supported colonialism, a striking absence given New Zealand's long-lasting imperial links.[23] Consequently, settler cultural histories in the twentieth century are detached from their immediate colonial context, inadvertently mirroring that epistemic break in older national histories.[24] Instead, settlement is implied as we examine what New Zealanders listened to, watched or ate. We unravel their imbrications in international cultural networks, suggesting they were more or less British or American or Australian, without much attention on how these networks also functioned to maintain or disrupt the colonial project. Modernity, then, which often underpins these explorations, can also act, like the 'nation', as an 'alibi' for colonization.

As a result, in new work as in old, cultural phenomena like pictorialist photography remain misunderstood. They are relegated as derivative, sentimental or nostalgic, and functionally decommissioned by terms like 'cultural cringe'. Yet almost twenty years ago W.J.T. Mitchell argued we needed to explore 'the ideological use of [such] conventions in their specific place and time'.[25] His subject was the now well-traversed terrain of imperial landscape painting. This article lowers its gaze from the grand prospect of fine art to the world of amateur art photography, but its intent is the same. As Beth Fowkes Tobin has shown in her work on eighteenth-century domestic portraits, botanical drawings and family conversation pieces, imperial power could also be 'asserted, redeployed and negotiated in what seem relatively benign, even mundane paintings'.[26] Amateur art photography has likewise been considered mundane marginalia to art and cultural historical discourses,[27] and it is also 'out of place' in work otherwise explicitly interested in the colonizing power of the camera.[28] There, photography's role as handmaiden in the production of 'objective' forms of colonial knowledge (often anthropological, topographical, or botanical) has been emphasized, rather than its role as an art form that both communicates and constructs subjective forms of knowledge. This is not to suggest aesthetics like the picturesque have been ignored in this work: James Ryan notes 'the way in which British landscape photographers of the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s disguised their dependence on pictorialist convention in order to promote photography as an objective record of sight, and in the process reinscribing imperial landscape as a natural way of seeing'.[29] But their role is as an auxiliary engine to activities (and thus times and spaces) already considered colonizing. However, as Moult's work

demonstrates, photographic art for art's sake, even the amateur version, was also integral to the business of 'rendering indigenous landscapes legible and suitable for settlement by whites'.[30]

To understand how images of clouds and mountains taken by an amateur photographer in interwar Wellington might be both colonial and colonizing, we need to move beyond the current constraints of colonial time and space. Accordingly, the first part of this article traces the dissemination and development of pictorialism in New Zealand from 1896 to the outbreak of the Second World War, on one hand to subvert the old idea of the slow erosion of metropolitan links from around the turn of the century, and on the other, to provide a specific example of how what might be termed a transnational culture can be 'profoundly colonial'.[31] Having repositioned pictorialism as both contemporary and colonial, the article then turns to its colonizing role, examining Moult's photographs themselves to reveal the aesthetic's part in constructing a 'new' version of New Zealand. Here the aim is not to replace one search for identity, one 'nation', with another. Rather, if the 'nation' was a colonizing force, then we should continue to interrogate its construction through the twentieth century.

There was nothing outdated about pictorialism's introduction into New Zealand. In 1896, just four years after leading British pictorialists had founded the influential 'Linked Ring Brotherhood' to promote the new aesthetic, a collection of their work arrived in New Zealand.[32] By this time the locals were already practising. Containing work by Henry Peach Robinson, claimed as the founding father of pictorialism, and other luminaries like Alfred Horsley Hinton, the collection offered photographers an 'inestimable service … in helping them improve their own work'.[33] Another 'improving' collection arrived in 1899, when more than six hundred photographs were exhibited in Wellington. Most of the work was by Australasian photographers, evidence of pictorialism's rapid dissemination, but collectors had also loaned works by Robinson, Horsley Hinton and other British notables.[34] In 1905, the first collection from the Royal Photographic Society (RPS) arrived in New Zealand and circulated around the colony's camera clubs.[35] Another 132 examples of English pictorialist photography graced the British Court at the 1906 Christchurch Exhibition.[36] Pictorialism also made an appearance at the Auckland Exhibition in 1913. Work by 'the principal men' was included in the collection of more than 600 works of art specially brought from Britain: it was expected that 'even Auckland will be highly pleased with them'.[37]

New Zealand's turn-of-the-century surge of interest in pictorialism was roughly contemporaneous with the development of pictorialism elsewhere. There was no sense of colonial backwardness. From the late nineteenth to the

early twentieth century, pictorialism spread internationally to become 'the dominant photographic aesthetic', with outstanding practitioners in Europe and America; New Zealand was swept up in that first wave.[38] But what is also immediately apparent is the extent to which New Zealand's experience of this new transnational art form was accessed through older colonial channels. This did not preclude outside influence: indeed, there are hints of the prominent American pictorialist Alfred Stieglitz's early work in some of Harry Moult's London cityscapes,[39] and in 1930, one hundred photographs from the New York Camera club, along with work by Austrian photographer Dr Emil Mayer, were shown in Auckland.[40] But despite the importance of other centres, such as Vienna and Paris, and artists like Stieglitz and his Photo Secessionist movement, pictorialism in New Zealand had a strong British tone. Exhibitions were sourced from Britain, frequently featured British photographers, and were supported by British institutions like the RPS. This early tendency was persistent. The flow of exhibitions subsided around the outbreak of the Great War, a period when the pictorialist movement itself seemed to lose momentum. But after the war, pictorialism found its 'second wind', and by the 1920s, the old circuits were up and running again.[41] Collections from the *Photograms of the Year* (an international publication compiled in London) were circulating around New Zealand in the 1920s, and during the 1930s the RPS sent two small collections, including *Here and There in England*, which did the rounds of camera clubs in 1934.[42] In 1938 a major public exhibition showcased the pictorialist section of the RPS 1937 Annual Exhibition. On this occasion, Aucklanders clearly were impressed: over 1400 people visited the show in a week.[43]

Exhibitions were just one way in which new connections with the old centre were fostered. Aspiring pictorialists could pick up key texts in the genre from local booksellers, whose stock included Horsley Hinton's *Handbook of Illustrations* and early art photographer Peter Emerson's *Naturalistic Photography*.[44] Newspapers helped by reprinting occasional overseas articles on the subject. However, the most influential early print advocate of pictorialism was *Sharland's New Zealand Photographer*. Founded in 1892, the publication was an offshoot of the pharmaceutical distribution agency Sharland and Company. Photographic supplies were a burgeoning new commodity class, and the journal was designed to capitalize on this, carrying information and advertisements for all types of photography. The growing interest in amateur art photography was good for business. What might have been simply a trade journal became oriented towards amateur photographers (although when it began, camera work was still complex enough that there might be a fine line between the skills of an amateur and professional). The

journal ran articles (often cribbed from overseas publications like the *Amateur Photographer* or *Photographic News*) on topics such as how to photograph children or clouds, and the best places to find 'native' colour ('a good plan is to desert the carriage roads wherever possible and take excursions over the country bypaths. Good specimens of native life can thus be more easily found and added to the scenes').[45]

As well as offering instruction, *Sharland's* helped construct the local amateur photographic culture with reader competitions and reports on club meetings. For a time, it even carried the Wellington Camera Club Bulletin as an insert.[46] It also drew those readers into a wider photographic community. Editor Josiah Martin had organized that first touring exhibition in 1896. He also encouraged local photographers to enter overseas competitions, reviewed the international photographic press and kept readers up to date on the myriad debates around pictorialist practice. However, that wider photographic community retained a strong metropolitan influence. It did, on occasion, extend to include the United States or Europe, but more frequently featured contributions from the rest of Britain's white settler colonies, and pictorialism there, just as in New Zealand, showed the continuing imprint of the metropolis. In 1899, British art critic H. Snowden Ward, reviewing Canadian photographs, wished that they 'would evolve their own school, expressing their own thoughts, feelings and even prejudices, and giving us something of the real spirit of the breezy frank progressive life of their colony'.[47] Even by the 1930s, still 'no distinctive Canadian style emerged in photography as it had in the painting for the Group of Seven'.[48] Australia, a regular contributor to exhibitions and competitions in New Zealand (and vice versa), was little different. As early as 1901, the Australian reviewer for *Photograms of the Year* 'deemed it an unpardonable error to depict Australian scenes with uncharacteristic English mists', but an English miasma hovered over its pictorialist practice for some time.[49] Australian journals also featured 'controversies in Britain and other centres over the new art photography', along with articles on famous British pictorialists who were 'often cited by Australian Pictorialist photographers as major influences'.[50] So while intercolonial conduits existed, they acted more as echo chambers for metropolitan culture than sources of an alternative vision. For New Zealand, London remained the pictorialist centre. *Sharland's* journal embodied this; though it had a New Zealand editor and a New Zealand audience, the magazine itself was produced in London.

It was not just pictorialist photographs that circulated. Photographers travelled too, and as they did, they forged another set of connections with the metropolis. English photographers E.T. Robson and J.W. Johnson arrived in

Wellington around 1917, re-energizing pictorialist practice in the capital and setting standards 'the equal of any'.[51] However, the best-known example is George Chance, a professional photographer who came to New Zealand in 1909. Having trained under Horsley Hinton himself – to whom he referred familiarly as 'our dear old Horsley Hinton' – Chance's pictorialist pedigree was unmatched, and he became an important figure in the development of this form in New Zealand, especially through his involvement with the Dunedin Photographic Society.[52] His influence also reached beyond the local coterie of art photographers. Chance claimed more than 30,000 of his picturesque 'Camera Studies' had sold in New Zealand. His Anglicized visions of New Zealand's rolling hills and billowing clouds made suitably picturesque additions to the nation's sitting rooms; they also made perfect wedding gifts.[53]

These circuits of pictures and people created dynamic and contemporary connections with both the metropolis and this particular aesthetic. They were colonial extensions of what Elizabeth Edwards has described in the metropolitan context as a 'massive system of dissemination of ideas and images' about pictorialism.[54] Camera clubs were at the heart of this system. In New Zealand, as elsewhere, clubs sprang up in the late nineteenth century as technological developments like dry-plate processing and hand-held cameras made photography more accessible. New Zealand's first camera club was formed in Wellington in 1882, and by 1899 *Sharland's* listed 13 clubs, not only in major centres but also in places like Denniston and Hokitika.[55] It has been suggested that clubs began to decline around 1910, as other technological advances further demystified the business of taking pictures. With a Kodak, anyone could be a photographer: it no longer required the specialist skill or knowledge that camera clubs could provide.[56] However, while there is evidence of a decline around this time, camera clubs survived and even thrived over the longer term. Wellington's club, reputedly one of the largest in the country in the period, makes a useful example. In 1901 it boasted 106 members, but by 1903 this had declined to 59.[57] Numbers are difficult to track again until the end of the 1920s, but by then, there were 68 members, and these numbers remained reasonably steady through the depressed years of the early 1930s.[58] By 1938, however, club membership levels had more than doubled to 150.[59] For a short period they even boasted a second club, the Wellington Camera Circle, for the serious pictorialist. Its founding members included Harry Moult, J.W. Johnson and A.H. Eaton, whose brother, John B. Eaton, was one of Melbourne's leading pictorialists. Nor was the resurgent interest in camera clubs restricted to the main centres. Interclub competitions began in 1919, and clubs from Timaru, Masterton and Hamilton now competed alongside venerable clubs like Dunedin and Auckland.[60]

Reminiscent of nineteenth-century 'improving' institutions like Athenaeums and libraries, camera clubs helped to weave together the local fabric of community, one that incorporated wider colonial social patterns. At least in the case of the Wellington Camera Club, photography was gendered. Though club activities were open to all, women members were fewer, and they played only supporting roles within the club structure, as librarian, secretary or treasurer, never as president or vice-president. Camera work did little to upset domestic conventions: after an enjoyable club social evening, including a banjo recital and some Spanish dancing, 'supper was served by the ladies'.[61] Clubs likewise may have reflected and reinforced racial divisions. Though Māori were early and eager consumers of photography, in particular co-opting portrait photography in a distinctive way, there is as yet little evidence of Māori involvement in art photography.[62] Finally, the club reflected some elements of settler colonial social mobility. While the expense of photography marked it as a pursuit for those with some disposable income, and the club regularly had a knight or lord as patron, club membership was more diverse. Professional photographers, not necessarily of great means, mixed with well-heeled amateurs. The decline in membership over the depression period, and then its strong rebound, further suggests some fluidity in the social status of members.

Clubs also reinscribed broader imperial connections, constructing themselves as part of a wider white empire, regularly swapping prints and holding competitions with clubs in other settler colonies. Dunedin exchanged prints and slides with Tasmanian, Johannesburg, South Australian and Melbourne-based clubs, while Gisborne swapped with Edinburgh, South Africa and Tasmania too.[63] Different landscapes were circulating, even if they were all framed by the same vision.

At the same time, clubs strengthened the metropolitan connection in two key ways. First, they acted as lightning rods for its pictorialist conventions, channelling lofty principles into practical camera work through regular programmes of lectures, seminars and competitions. Pictorialism was not their sole interest, but it dominated.[64] The Gisborne Camera Club, formed in 1934, aspired to 'work on similar lines to the camera Pictorialists of Auckland'; membership was 'open to all workers sufficiently advanced to be doing their own work and with aspirations towards pictorialism'.[65] Most clubs would train budding pictorialists. One lecturer simply advised beginners, 'after serving an apprenticeship in landscape photography, to practice on children'; but there were also more detailed programmes on offer, including lectures on composition, lighting and processing.[66] Once taught, pictorialism's conventions and its particular way of seeing would then be

tested. Clubs generally ran regular monthly competitions, with subjects and marking criteria that reinforced and codified the pictorialist aesthetic. In 1929, the Wellington Camera Club held competitions 'practically every month', with 'marks being awarded and constructive criticism being available for the guidance of members'.[67]

These programmes worked to substantiate pictorialist practice, embedding its aesthetic amongst local practitioners. At the same time, clubs worked to substantiate their connection with the metropolitan photographic world, for they considered themselves active participants in this culture, not simply passive recipients of it. Camera club enthusiasm for affiliating with the RPS is perhaps the clearest sign of their engagement. When the Gisborne photographic club was formed in 1934, they 'arranged immediately to be affiliated with the Royal Photographic Society of England'. Dunedin started earlier, but took a little longer: after a number of false starts dating back to 1901, it was finally affiliated in 1927.[68] The Auckland Camera Club joined in 1931, and Wellington affiliated twice: once in 1901, and then again in 1926, as the club structure changed.[69] The desire to be active participants in this metropolitan world was obvious in other ways. Individual New Zealand photographers contributed material to prestigious English journals, and showed their work in London galleries. Two featured in *Photograms of the Year* as early as 1902, while leading local pictorialists, Gerald E. Jones and the lesser-known T.D. Leedham, were included in an *Amateur Photographer* exhibition in London in 1910.[70] Other photographers, like Una Garlick, went on to be exhibited at the Royal Photographic Society. New Zealand even sent a special collection of its pictorialist photography to the Society for exhibition in 1932.[71] The local press regularly reported on such 'success overseas', noting awards, exhibitions and the occasional nomination of a New Zealand photographer as a fellow or associate of the RPS. [72]

Participation, like the rapid spread of pictorialism itself, was underwritten by the power of new linkages between the old imperial centre and its once distant colony. They were not transmitted along the slowly weakening ties of blood and sentiment so beloved in imperial rhetoric, but by new technologies. This meant pictorialism was less a legacy of old ties than a product of their rejuvenation. Moult himself embodied this transformation, and not only through his pictorialist practice. Born in England and raised in Wanganui, he completed his engineering apprenticeship at the General Electric Company in the family's old home town in Salford, Manchester, before returning to New Zealand, where he specialized in the very modern business of installing elevators: by 1919, 'upwards of 180 elevators in various buildings throughout the Dominion'.[73] His elevators were British, so the metropolis acted as a

natural extension of his professional life. Moult made at least five return trips there in the period between 1906 and 1931.[74]

These new connections also meant the old boundaries between centre and periphery could blur. Elizabeth Edwards has described a similar blurring effect within England itself, where the spread of information about photography meant developments were no longer restricted to a rarified elite. Instead, clubs formed a 'community of photographic values', in which amateurs from 'provincial towns like Huddersfield or Kings Lynn' gathered to discuss the very latest developments in photographic practice.[75] Improved communications meant clubs in Wellington and Gisborne could also join the conversation, virtual provincial extensions to this metropolitan system. Indeed, when local entries to an *Amateur Photographer* competition were returned without comment, *Sharland's* called it 'distinctly disappointing'. Contributors had not been given the 'benefit of critical opinion and advice' from the 'masters of pictorial photography' that they had been 'led to expect'.[76] Yet, as this complaint also suggests, although boundaries could blur, the respective roles of the colony and metropolis were quite clear. Colonial participation in the metropolitan world reinforced the centre's pre-eminent cultural role. In this respect, pictorialism's colonial role took on another, collaborative dimension. Amateur art photographers, both local and metropolitan, reinscribed the power of the imperial centre, albeit by new means. New technologies and the changed perceptions of time and space that flowed from them meant conversations could technically be held anywhere: pictorialism was, after all, an international aesthetic. But for local photographers, the most important ones remained in the metropolis.

Pictorialist practice then led to the construction of a new set of cultural relationships with the old metropolis, a dynamic masked by its reputation as a convention-ridden 'stylistic straitjacket', and equally conventional approaches to analyzing colonialism. But its colonizing power was not confined to the creation of new linkages. Pictorialism's way of seeing, disseminated through books, journals, and exhibitions, then perfected in local camera clubs, actively constructed a distinct version of New Zealand, as a metropolitan aesthetic was redeployed in a colonial setting. This in itself was nothing new: photography had been used to reshape the colony before. Nineteenth-century New Zealand had a vigorous photographic culture, which among other possible readings, can be seen as colonizing.[77] Early images of raw farms, bustling settlements and acres of bush worked to domesticate the land and advertise its colonial potential. In portraits, a mainstay of early photography, migrants were reproduced as settlers, though the painted backdrops and odd sticks of furniture routinely employed in portraiture appear now as symbolic reminders of the instability

of this identity in colonial societies. Further, the thriving business of taking images of exotic indigenes and strange landscapes for collectible *cartes de visite*, postcards and stereoscopes was an extractive industry, like gold mining or running sheep, which converted the land and its peoples into commodities for an 'emerging Victorian mass market in visual culture'.[78] Indeed, in her study of the most prolific early photographers, the Burton Brothers, Christine Whybrew argues that their products are best understood as 'commodities rather than art objects'.[79] These commodified and circulating images then took on another colonial guise, working to construct the imaginative geography of empire, which, as James Ryan has argued, 'collapsed and confused the spaces of home with those of afar'.[80]

Pictorialism continued photography's colonizing career but it shifted the mode. This is best illustrated by returning to our starting point, Harry Moult's 1930 exhibition. In the landscapes of pictorialists like Moult, what has passed for cliché is instead colonialism in a new guise. 'Home', rather than empire, could be relocated, its places and their cultural meanings 'collapsed and confused' in colonial spaces. New Zealand places were transformed by the pictorialist preference for an imagined 'English' ruralism. Moult's collection includes a number of studies of teams of working animals, forming local recreations of commonplace English studies of rural life.[81] He was not alone; the prolific George Chance had also made similar studies, including 'Labourers of the Field', created in 1925, and 'The Resting Team, South Otago', which was exhibited internationally in 1932. Chance's work typically drew on 'the features in the New Zealand landscape and architecture which seemed the most English' and Moult's did the same.[82] Through judicious selection and composition, as in his shot of a 'Pensioners [sic] Hut', a semblance of England's old world could be recreated here.[83]

An appropriate atmosphere: Harry Moult, 'The Pensioners Hut', O.032246, MNZ.

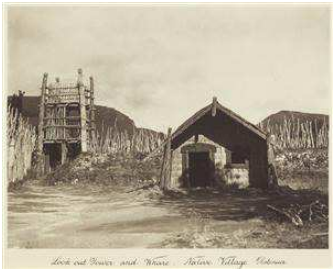
This careful curating of New Zealand's landscape along 'English' pictorialist lines becomes even clearer when we compare Moult's New Zealand work with his collection of photographs of England. When placed alongside his image of an English stone bridge, the bridge over Christchurch's Avon River appears even more Anglicized.[84] An avenue of local trees is given the same composition as wintry trees lining London's Mall,[85] with the native rimu rendered the visual equivalent of trees in one of England's storied parks.[86]

Equivalent landscapes: Harry Moult, 'Beeches and birches, Rotorua', O.032217; The Mall in winter', O.032094, MNZ.

As Elizabeth Edwards notes, 'it was precisely such subject matter – landscapes, rural idylls, allegories of life and work, and redolent with historical references – which constituted key tropes in pictorialist practice, at least in the British school'.[87] But creating the requisite English rural idyll could be difficult in the colonial setting. *Sharland's* advised readers, 'Farmhouses in the dominion suffer from the fault of being too modern. We have no abbey farms with gnarled trees and the stone homestead hoary with age and weight of ivy around its walls. … therefore in farm landscape picture making there is ample scope for careful reflection in order to give the correct emotional value to the photograph.'[88] Local pictorialist photographers continued to be challenged by the realities of their environment into the 1920s. In 1928, the New Zealand report for *Photograms of the Year* regretted that 'while the dominion quite easily holds its own as regards technique, the beautiful architecture and landscapes so full of atmosphere are beyond us'.[89]

These perceived limitations influenced the 'New Zealand' constructed pictorially in an unexpected fashion. Whilst photographers could carefully select their subjects to appear more suitably English, it is likely that the lack of 'beautiful architecture' left them more reliant on landscapes, even if these too were less atmospheric than the ideal. As a result, pictorialism may have played an understated and contrary role in the much wider artistic and cultural construction of a New Zealand identity defined by its natural environment, but one that is at odds with readings of the appropriation of local landscapes as a sign of finding a 'home in thought'. A lack of suitably 'British' pictorial scenes, rather than a simple growing appreciation of the local environment, may have reinforced the concentration on those typical 'wonderland' subjects like mountains and geysers, their difference contained by the pictorialist aesthetic.

These subjects constructed New Zealand as an empty land as much as a wonderland. Moult's pictorialist mountains and lakes were uninhabited spaces, and they must have seemed even emptier when exhibited with his photographs of the English countryside.[90] Here were landscapes 'full of atmosphere', populated by thatched cottages, country lanes and quaint villages.[91] By comparison, his New Zealand countryside seems not only empty, but new. For in Moult's work, signs of New Zealand's own past were strangely absent. In a collection of more than two hundred photographs, Māori feature in only four, about the same number as his shots of the Swiss Alps. When they do appear, they have their own 'correct emotional value'. Unlike the Pensioner's Hut, the buildings in 'Look-out tower and whare, native village' are deserted: even the hills behind have been cleared.[92] It is possible to read this as simply a twentieth-century extension of an older colonial cultural habit of appropriation and effacement of indigeneity. But Moult's images seem to embalm, rather than appropriate, Māori culture, framing it as a remnant of the colonial past no longer relevant to 'modern' New Zealand.



'Old' New Zealand: Harry Moult, 'Look-out tower and whare, native village, Rotorua', O.032189, MNZ.

That these images were meant to represent a disappearing way of life is underlined by their categorization by Moult into an album entitled 'Record Pictures'. This was another imported British practice.[93] The term 'record' was used to describe work generated by the photographic survey movement in Britain. An 'ethnographic salvage' project, the survey movement assigned itself the task of capturing old buildings, customs and other cultural remains before they disappeared entirely.[94] Proper record pictures were supposed to be unadorned, documentary-like images. In this context, Moult's images work to evoke the pastness of Māori ways of life. Nor were the traces of Māori habitation the only part of old New Zealand to be consigned in this way. Amongst Moult's record pictures are a number of studies of working animals. Once again the embalming impulse is at work: at the time these photographs were being taken, working animals were steadily being replaced by farm machinery. Yet, as we have seen, their links with an imagined English ruralism meant they, unlike Māori individuals and communities, remained desirable pictorialist subjects.[95]

The processes described here resonate with older forms of colonial culture that cleared the land to create a verisimilitude of 'Home'. But, again, this is not the nineteenth-century version: the lonely landscapes of colonial boosters, for example, offered the promise of progress – 'your farm here' – and as proof of that potential, they were often partnered with busy townscapes, where the indigenous inhabitants merged colourfully but decorously with a growing settler population. Moult's landscapes offer no such promise. Their function is to remain empty, creating a 'new' New Zealand as a complementary 'British' hinterland space. Accordingly, there was no attempt to recreate an urban version. Street scenes, crowds, monumental buildings – in short, urban life – were all contained within his work on London.[96] This was not necessarily the product of pictorialist convention, which, despite its preference for the picturesque, could still embrace the cityscape. Indeed, Moult's own images of London continued to exhibit pictorialism's favourite motifs, often including natural elements like trees or weather effects like snow or rain.[97] Rather, this division reflects the changing colonial form in which his work was both part and product. As the dissemination of pictorialism showed, New Zealand functioned like a hinterland. Perhaps it is not surprising then that in pictorialist images, it appeared as one.

Urban life: Harry Moult, One of London's wet days, O.031867, MNZ.

Moult's exhibition only lasted a week. Though Lord Bledisloe wanted images like these hung in homes around the country, to simultaneously uplift the working classes and promote this 'incomparably attractive country', both Moult's work and the wider pictorialist school to which it belonged have subsequently slipped from view.[98] For nationalists, pictorialism is a colonial cul-de-sac; for postcolonial historians, it is hardly colonial enough. Yet a careful examination of pictorialism's development in New Zealand demonstrates its role in constructing new connections with the old imperial centre. These were not sclerotic ties of blood and empire, but contingent and dynamic connections forged around a new visual culture. Modernity and transnationalism here take on a noticeably colonial flavour. Further, the new aethestic was itself colonizing. If, as Gary Sampson and Eleanor Hight have argued, 'visualisation of place was nevertheless important for the development of colonialist ideology … both the geographic location and the people who lived there had to eventually be overcome', then Moult's chocolate-box images of a picturesque rural hinterland and its metropolis are perhaps colonial photography's apogee.[99] Until we reconsider colonialism's changing times as well as its different spaces, however, the ongoing role of metropolitan culture in creating and sustaining New Zealand's settler society – especially its 'national identity' – into the twentieth century, may remain outside the frame.

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NOTES

1 *Evening Post* (EP), 22 August 1930, p.3. The gallery was the precursor to the first National Gallery.

2 EP, 1 September 1930, p.11. It is not clear where 'overseas' they were exhibited. As he was a frequent traveller to England, this is the most likely locale, but there is no direct evidence for this.

3 EP, 2 September 1930, p.8.

4 William Main, *Wellington Album*, Wellington, 1998, p.11.

5 There were also a small number of continental alpine shots, discussed later.

6 EP, 1 September 1930, p.11.

7 Ibid.

8 EP, 3 September 1930, p.13.

9 Felicity Barnes, *New Zealand's London: A Colony and its Metropolis*, Auckland, 2012.

10 James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*: *A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland, 2001, pp.53–86.

11 William Lake Price, *A Manual of Photographic Manipulation, Treating of the Practice of the Art; and its Various Applications to Nature*, 2nd edn, London, 1868, reprint edn New York, 1973, pp.1–2, quoted in Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographic Imagination*, London, 2003, p.2.

12 Most of the photographs discussed are held in four albums: 'Camera Pictures of New Zealand', AL.000247; 'Record Pictures of New Zealand', AL.000248; 'Photograph Album: London', AL.000249; and 'Photograph Album – England', AL.000250, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (MNZ). Many of these images were part of his exhibition.

13 John Turner, 'Contemporary Photography', *New Zealand's Heritage*, 7, 102 (1973), n.p.

14 David Eggleton, *Into the Light: A History of New Zealand Photography*, Nelson, 2006, p.56.

15 Ibid.

16 For a recent summary see Giselle Byrnes, 'Introduction', in Giselle Byrnes, ed., *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, South Melbourne, 2009, pp.1–18, and Giselle Byrnes and Catharine Coleborne, 'Editorial Introduction: The Utility and Futility of "The Nation" in Histories of Aotearoa New Zealand', NZJH, 45, 1 (2011), pp.1–14.

17 Exceptions include Chris Hilliard, 'Island Stories: The Writing of New Zealand History, 1920–1940', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 1997; Kirstie Ross, *Going Bush: New Zealanders and Nature in the Twentieth Century*, Auckland, 2008; Alex Calder, *The Settler's Plot: How Stories Take Place in New Zealand*, Auckland, 2011.

18 Tony Ballantyne, 'On Place, Space and Mobility in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand', NZJH, 45, 1 (2011), p.50.

19 Caroline Daley, 'Modernity, Consumption and Leisure', in Byrnes, ed., *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, pp.423–46.

20 For an example, see Miles Fairburn, 'Is There a Good Case for New Zealand Exceptionalism?', in Tony Ballantyne and Brian Moloughney, eds, *Disputed Histories: Imagining New Zealand's Pasts*, Dunedin, 2006, p.155. For an exception, see Conal McCarthy, *Exhibiting Māori: A History of Colonial Cultures of Display*, Oxford and Wellington, 2007.

21 As Damon Salesa has argued, firm national borders around colonialism have occluded New Zealand's imperial role in the Pacific. See Damon Salesa, 'New Zealand's Pacific', in Giselle Byrnes, ed., *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, pp.149–72.

22 Tony Ballantyne, 'Knowledge, Sociability and Community in Gore's Intellectual life, 1875–1914', NZJH, 44, 2 (2010), p.139.

23 Charlotte Macdonald's *Strong, Beautiful and Modern: National Fitness in Britain, New Zealand, Australia and Canada, 1935–1960*, Wellington, 2011, reveals the interplay between empire, modernity and nation: for an examination of New Zealand's place in a 'colonial reading world' see Lydia Wevers, *Reading on the Farm: Victorian Fiction and the Colonial World*, Wellington, 2010.

24 The reverse – history detached from 'culture' – is apparent in the recent *New Oxford History*. Despite a deep engagement with the idea of culture as colonizing force, there is no discussion of cultural production – high or low, or in any period – in this survey.

25 W.J.T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, Chicago, 1994, p.23.

26 Beth Fowkes Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power: Colonial Subjects in Eighteenth-Century British Paintings*, Durham and London, 1999, p.2.

27 Dona Schwartz, 'Camera Clubs and Fine Art Photography: The Social Construction of an Elite Code', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 15 (1986), p.166.

28 This is most apparent in work linking anthropology, colonialism and photography, e.g. Elizabeth Edwards, *Anthropology and Photography, 1860–1920*, London, 1992; Elizabeth Edwards and Christopher Morton, eds, *Photography, Anthropology, and History: Expanding the Frame*, Farnham, 2009; Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson, *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place*, London and New York, 2002; Christopher Pinney, *Photography and Anthropology*, London, 2011. Art photography falls outside the scope of James Ryan's *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire*, Chicago, 1997.

29 James Ryan, *Picturing Empire*, p.47; Hight and Sampson, *Colonialist Photography*, p.5. See also Giselle Byrnes's work on nineteenth-century New Zealand surveyors. Though not engaged with photography, it demonstrates the integration of 'objective' (scientific, commercial) and 'subjective' (panoptic, picturesque) views of the landscapes in the colonization process. Giselle Byrnes, *Boundary Markers: Land Surveying and the Colonisation of New Zealand*, Wellington, 2001.

30 Tony Ballantyne, 'Colonial Knowledge', in Sarah Stockwell, ed., *The British Empire: Themes and Perspectives*, Oxford, 2008, p.185.

31 Ballantyne, 'Knowledge, Sociability and Community, p.139.

32 EP, 17 March 1896, p.4.

33 *Daily Telegraph*, 3 October 1896, p.4.

34 EP, 17 June, 1899, p.2.

35 Gael Newton, 'Australian Pictorial Photography: Seeing the Light', in Thomas Padon, ed. *TruthBeauty: Pictorialism and the Photograph as Art, 1845–1945*, Vancouver, 2008, p.97; *Sharland's New Zealand Photographer* (SNZP), 7 March 1905, p.6.

36 *Auckland Star* (AS), 2 November 1906, p.5.

37 AS, 18 November 1913, p.4.

38 Elizabeth Edwards, 'Unblushing Realism and the Threat of the Pictorial: Photographic Survey and the Production of Evidence 1885–1918', *History of Photography*, Vol. 23, No, 1, 2009, p.9.

39 For example Moult's 'One of London's wet days', O.031867, MNZ and Alfred Stieglitz's 'A wet day on the boulevard, Paris', which was taken in 1894 but not printed until the 1920s–30s, http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/190021274?rpp=20&pg=6&ft=alfred+stieglitz&pos=103 (accessed 1 June 2013).

40 The works came at the invitation of prominent local photographer Gerald Jones. AS, 24 September 1930, p.8.

41 Alison Nordström and David Wooters, 'Crafting the Art of the Photograph', in Thomas Padon, ed., *TruthBeauty: Pictorialism and the Photograph as Art, 1845–1945*, Vancouver, 2008, p.45.

42 EP, 3 June 1966, p.6; T. Maguire, *The Lantern Was Lighted: A History of the Dunedin*

Photographic Society, 1890–1990, Dunedin, 1990, p.30.

43 AS, 10 November 1938, p.13.

44 *New Zealand Observer*, 22 February 1902, p.22.

45 These are all excerpted from other publications: SNZP, 8 August 1910, p.63; SNZP, 8 August 1910, p.59; SNZP, 7 April 1910, p.5.

46 SNZP, 7 November 1901, p.9.

47 H. Snowden Ward and Catherine Weed Ward, eds, *Photograms of the Year*, London, 1899, pp.73–74, quoted in Andrew Birrell, Peter Roberston, Lilly Koltun, Andrew Rodger and Lily Schwartz, 'On View: The Evolution of Amateur Photography', in Lily Koltun, ed., *Private Realms of Light: Amateur Photography in Canada 1839–1940*, Michigan, 1984, p.119.

48 Birrell, Roberston, Koltun, Rodger and Schwartz, p.127.

49 Newton, p.99. Newton discusses the development of an 'Australian school' around the time of the First World War; however, the focus is on a few key individuals rather than the practice as a whole.

50 Ibid.

51 Main, p.11; Eggleton, p.49.

52 Eggleton, p.49; Hardwicke Knight, *Photography in New Zealand: A Social and Technical History*, Dunedin, 1971, p.101.

53 Knight, p.101.

54 Edwards, 'Unblushing Realism', p.9.

55 SNZP, 7 November 1899, p.3.

56 Sandra Callister, 'Being There: War, Women and Lantern Slides', *Rethinking History*,12, 3 (2008), p.324.

57 EP, 9 June 1928, p.7; EP, 15 October 1903, p.7.

58 EP, 21 September 1929, p.23.

59 EP, 2 December 1938, p.8.

60 EP, 21 July 1919, p.10.

61 EP, 12 December 1933, p.14.

62 Judith Binney notes that though in the early twentieth century, 'the camera was still almost exclusively a European device', Māori 'quickly adopted photography for their own purposes'. These did not necessarily conform to the dictates of European art photography. She does however note the work of Anglican clergyman Canon Hakaraia Pahewa, who sent photographs of Māori life, especially communal work like mustering sheep and cutting up whale blubber, to the *Auckland Weekly News*. These subjects may also have fallen outside the particular canons of pictorialism, but nevertheless are an early example of engagement with art photography in some sense. See Judith Binney, 'Two Maori Portraits', in Judith Binney, *Stories without End: Essays 1975–2010*, Wellington, 2010, pp.62–69.

63 Isobel N. Coulston, ed., *Photographic Endeavours of the Gisborne Camera Club, 1916–1998*, Gisborne, 1998, pp.3–4; Maguire, p.32.

64 At the Wellington Camera Club meeting on 27 October 1931, for example, 'much useful information was given as to the proper procedure for photographing animals', while technically inclined members tinkered with experimental forms like telescopic lenses or rontgen rays: EP, 27 October 1931, p.3; Edwards, 'Unblushing Realism', p.5.

65 Coulston, p.3.

66 EP, 9 April 1927, p.14.

67 EP, 21 September 1929, p.23.

68 Maguire, p.15.

69 AS, 4 September 1931, p.3; EP, 18 September 1926, p.13.

70 SNZP, 7 January 1903, p.13.

71 Eggleton, p.52.

72 AS, 17 January 1931, p.10.

73 *Wanganui Herald*, 27 March 1906, p.6; *Wanganui Chronicle* (WC), 4 August 1919, p.5.

74 WC, 19 July 1906, p.5; EP, 7 January 1921, p.8; EP, 22 September 1926, p.13; EP, 20 May 1931, p.13.

75 Edwards, 'Unblushing Realism', p.9.

76 SNZP, 7 February 1910, p.4.

77 For a range of approaches to this work, see Angela Wanhalla and Erika Wolf, *Early New Zealand Photography: Images and Essays*, Dunedin, 2011. For the twentieth century, see Bronwyn Dalley, 'Chance Residues: Photographs and Social History', in Ballantyne and Moloughney, pp.169–90.

78 Callister, 'Being There: War, Women and Lantern Slides', p.322.

79 Christine Whybrew, 'The Burton Brothers Studio: Commerce in Photography and the Marketing of New Zealand, 1866–1898', PhD thesis, University of Otago, 2010, p.64.

80 Ryan, *Picturing Empire*, p.219.

81 Harry Moult, 'Homeward Bound', O.032249; Harry Moult, 'Homeward Bound', O.032244; Harry Moult, 'The Bullock Team', O.032554; Harry Moult, 'The Log Team', O.032232; Harry Moult, 'The Team', O.032243; all from 'Camera Pictures of New Zealand', MNZ.

82 Linda Tyler, *George Chance, Improving on Nature*, Auckland, 2006, n.p.

83 Harry Moult, 'The Pensioners Hut', O.032246, MNZ.

84 Harry Moult, 'Stone Bridge', O.032118, MNZ; 'The river Avon, Christchurch, N.Z', O.032219, MNZ.

85 Harry Moult, 'Beeches and Birches, Rotorua', O.032217; 'The Mall in winter', O.032094, MNZ.

86 Harry Moult, 'Path through park', O.032120; 'Native Rimu' O.031881, MNZ.

87 Edwards, 'Unblushing Realism', p.6.

88 SNZP, 7 September 1911, p.59.

89 'Photography in New Zealand', in F. J. Mortimer, ed., *Photograms of the Year*, London, 1928, p.8.

90 For a full collection of his pictorial work, see Harry Moult, 'Camera Pictures of New Zealand', AL.000247, MNZ. Further alpine scenes appear in his 'Record Pictures of New Zealand' album, but as discussed later, these have both a different style and function. AL.000248, MNZ.

91 Studies of the English countryside are found in 'Photograph Album – England', Al.000250, MNZ.

92 Harry Moult, 'Look-out tower and whare, native village, Rotorua', O.032189, MNZ.

93 Although largely a turn-of-the-century movement, the Royal Society's *Photographic Journal* promoted a survey of historic English cottages, in 1928–1929, around the time Moult was photographing: *Photographic Journal*, January 1929, p.39.

94 Edwards, 'Unblushing Realism', pp.3–4.

95 There is one Māori 'camera picture'. Called 'A Favourite Tune in Maori', it features a young boy crying, and fuses pictorialist interest in portraiture and allegory with the aesthetic of a nineteenth-century peasant painting. Harry Moult, 'A Favourite Tune in Maori', O.032218, MNZ.

96 Harry Moult, 'Photograph Album – London', AL.000249, MNZ.

97 Harry Moult, 'Winter Sunshine, Victoria Embankment', 'Photograph Album–London', O.032098, NZ.

98 EP, 2 September, 1930, p.5.

99 Hight and Sampson, *Colonialist Photography*, p.4.